

# Northumbria Research Link

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# Sustainable Urban Competitiveness and Low Income Residential Development: Experience from Newcastle upon Tyne, UK



**Dr Geoff O'Brien**

10<sup>th</sup> International Forum on Urban Competitiveness  
Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, 27<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June 2012

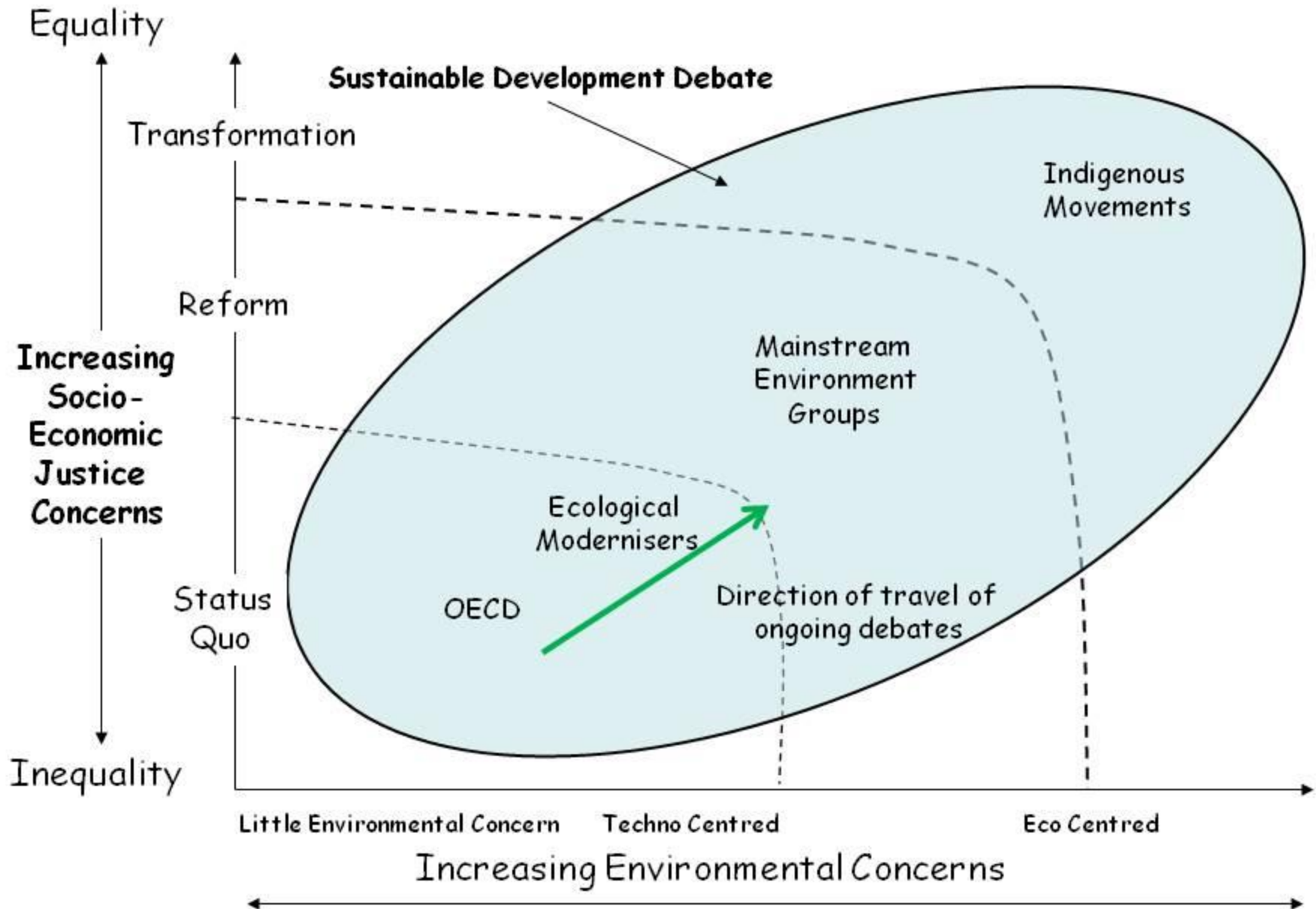
# **Overview of Presentation**

Context

Short history of Newcastle upon Tyne

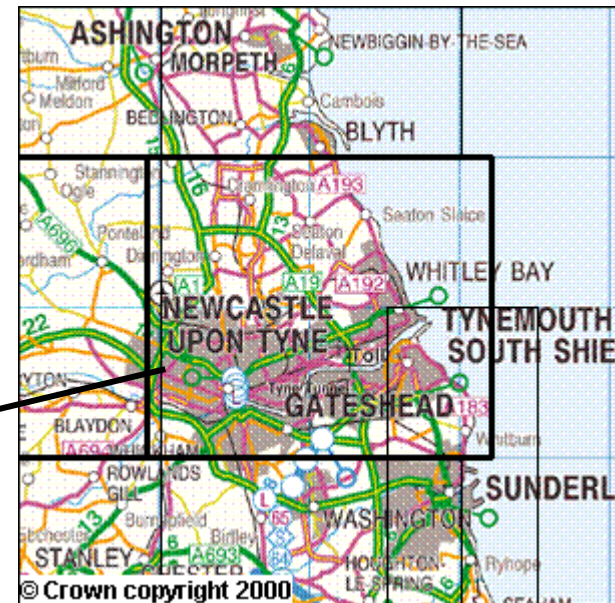
Regeneration

# Mapping Sustainable Development



Source: Adapted from Hopwood, O'Brien and Mellor 2005

# Newcastle upon Tyne



Founded in 1080 AD

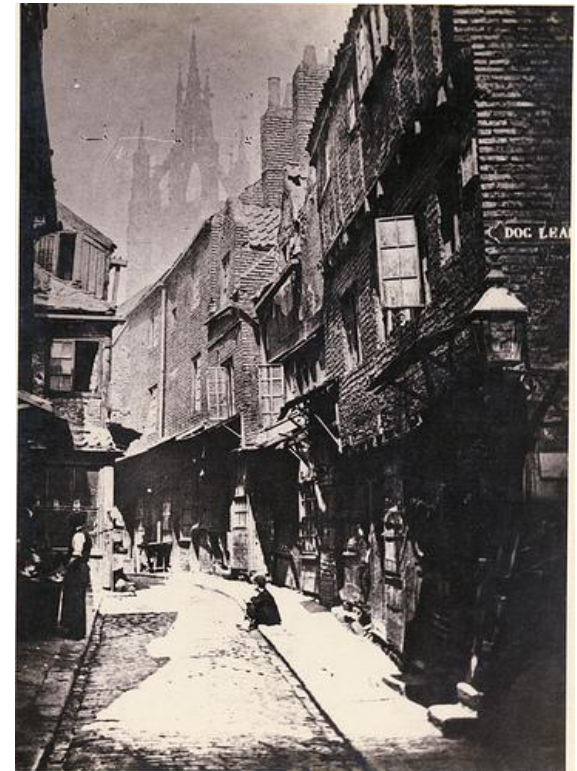
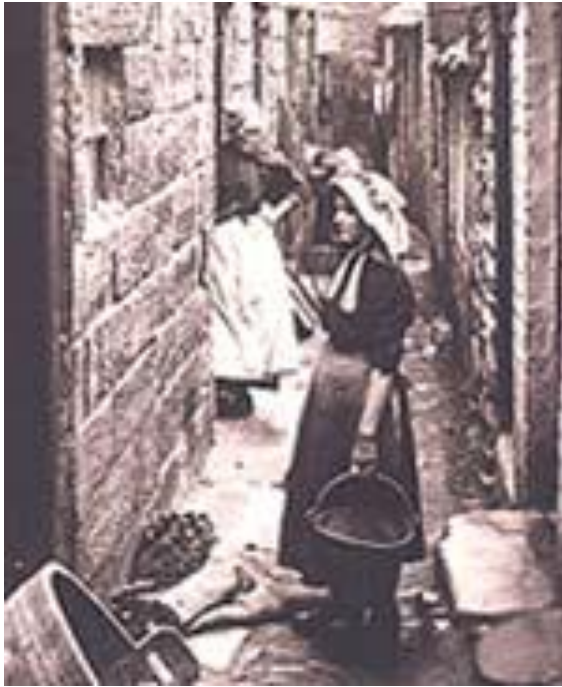
Grew rapidly during Industrial Revolution

Main sectors: Coal, Shipbuilding, Armaments, Locomotives, Heavy Engineering



# Newcastle upon Tyne

But industrialisation brought other problems!



**Poor Housing  
Bad Public Health  
Urban Poverty**

# Newcastle upon Tyne

Post WWII efforts were made to improve housing but the emphasis was placed on suburbs and many parts of the inner-city declined



Many social housing projects were of a low standard and quickly became unpopular. As the traditional heavy industries closed these areas began to decline, leading to high unemployment and crime.



# Newcastle upon Tyne

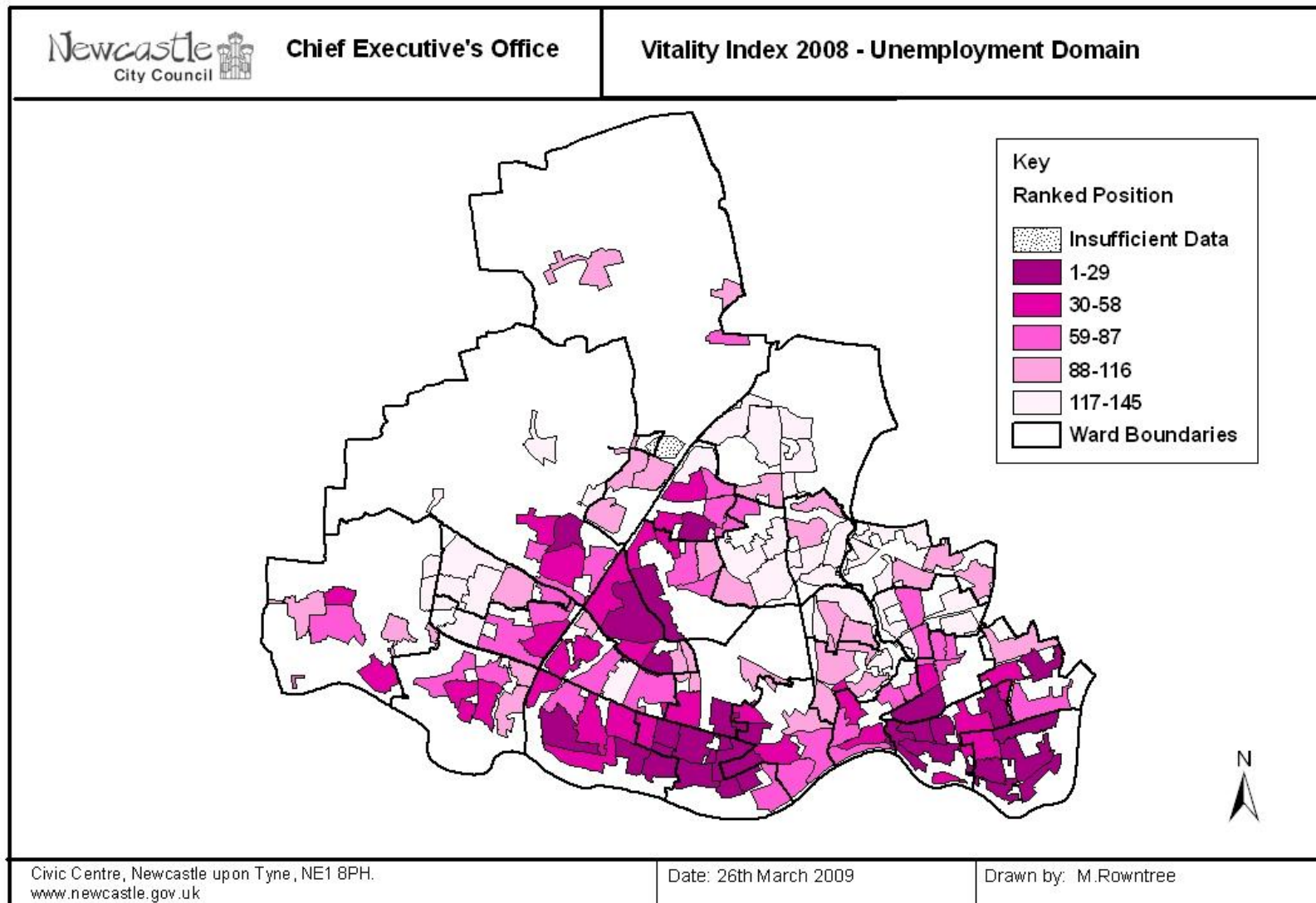
Many of the pre 1919 terraced streets remain. Building new homes is not feasible.  
Refurbishment of existing properties is needed.





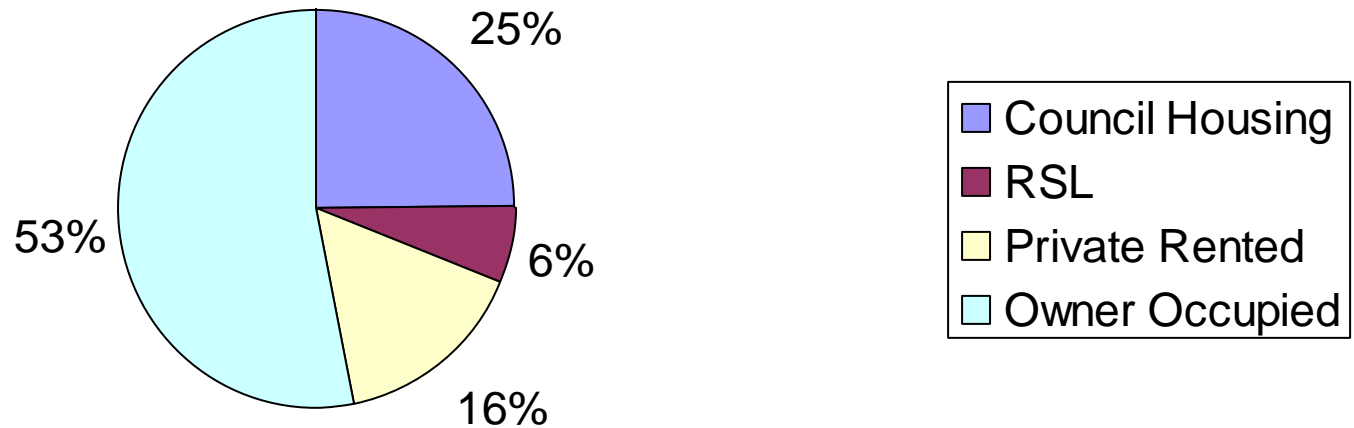
# Newcastle upon Tyne

Vitality is measure using unemployment, crime , educational and health data



# Newcastle upon Tyne Housing Facts

## Housing Stock in Newcastle. Total 120,000 dwellings



What has happened?



Where possible we have replaced

Old with New



## What has happened?



Refurbished existing stock



Air-tightness test

**What has happened?**



Built very energy efficient homes for older people

## **New Deal for Communities (2000-2012)**

A 10 year programme focused on Community-Led Regeneration

Covered 4000 households (about 3% of city housing stock)

Area selected has some of highest levels of deprivation in the UK – the inner west of the city the traditional heavy industries has disappeared – high levels of Unemployment and crime, low educational attainment and poor health statistics.

Main themes were education, jobs and business, health, crime and community safety, community, and housing

The belief was that we had to things differently as all previous projects in the inner-west had failed – the aim was involved the community in all aspects of the regeneration programme.



## **What was achieved?**

- Sustained reduction in overall crime in area (50%) since 2000
- 16 Community Safety projects, including Community Policing team based in the area, Neighbourhood Wardens, Youth Inclusion Project
- Improved over 2000 houses
- Helped 1300 local people into jobs
- Large scale environmental improvements
- Gap in vitality between NDC area and rest of city has narrowed by 5 percentage points

## New Deal for Communities (2000-2012)



Demolition to create green Spaces



## New Deal for Communities (2000-2012)



Refurbished and re-designated existing tower blocks: social housing (to rent), affordable housing (can only be purchased by low-income families) and a block for the over 50s.



## New Deal for Communities (2000-2012)



Refurbished existing homes and improved the public realm

## **Centre West**

The Centre West charity was established to carry on the work of New Deal

It is funded by a property portfolio acquired during New Deal

It has developed a new building, The Beacon, that acts as a community focal point

The building is rated at the highest UK environmental standard, BREAAAM Excellent

Activities in the Beacon include incubator units for entrepreneurs, artist units, a local community radio station, office space, training facilities, temporary supported business pods, a bistro and a large flexible multi-purpose space

# The Beacon





## Concluding Remarks

There is no point in repeating the mistakes of the past – do things differently

Getting the community to engage is difficult but it does improve effectiveness

Linking housing improvements to employment opportunities with targeted support packages does work – living a nicer and safer environment does change attitudes

Though New Deal was a relatively small project it does show actively working with people can deliver results

Don't give up!



**Thank You and Any Questions?**